

# ZOE SETTLE

## TEACHING PHILOSOPHY



Having been teaching in the arts field for over four years, I have been in classrooms of all shapes and sizes with students of varying abilities and backgrounds. Some of my favorite teaching jobs have been in theaters where I will meet with students several times in a short period to learn and create a project together. My most memorable jobs have been the ones where I have gotten to be with students throughout a year, and work and grow right alongside them.

My work has taken me to contracts and theaters all over the DFW metroplex, teaching in recreation centers, dance studios, any space that has a room where a story can be told. What I have learned from this is that it's not where you're doing the work, but what you're doing, and who you're with.

An arts education is vital to becoming a well-rounded individual. Through the arts, and particularly theatre, one can learn how to interact with others better, and to understand them on an emotional level. Creating that connection and sense of community is vital no matter what career students go on to pursue later in life. The earlier these skills can be acquired, the better they will serve the student. While we are learning to perform and to tell stories, we are also learning how to communicate, and how to be human.

As a teacher, I hope to share my passion with my students and help them find a sense of play, as well as their self-confidence through the world of theatre. I encourage the use of creativity and imagination, as well as collaboration. In any classroom I enter, I encourage students to bring themselves -- who they are, where they come from, what they like and dislike -- to the class. In my capacity as an educator, I am going to meet my students where they are, every time.

One of my biggest mantras has become that there are no mistakes in art. I see my students feeling a pressure and a need to get something "right". However, in my classroom, I make a point to ensure that whatever creative choices we're making are celebrated. Even if someone "messes up" it's a learning moment on how we can keep moving forward when something doesn't go as expected.

My ultimate mission as an arts educator is to instill confidence in my students, as well as to plant the seeds for a potential lifelong appreciation of the arts. In my theater classes, we don't just learn about drama, we learn about ourselves and the world around us, creating important opportunities for socio-emotional learning and growth. Additionally, even though I know not every student who walks into my classroom will be a future actor, I hope to arm them with the tools to be a good leader, collaborator, creative problem solver, and confident public speaker. Finally, I want my students to know that my classroom is **always** a place to feel safe, and most importantly, to play.